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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 003091

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SUBJECT: INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY TELLS AMBASSADOR "NEVER
SEEN LEVELS OF ANGER LIKE THIS;" DOES NOT EXPECT IMMEDIATE
MILITARY ACTION BY INDIA

Classified By: AMB David C. Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (S) Summary. Ambassador met with Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon on December 8 to discuss the Secretary's trip to the region (Menon was out of the country during on December 4) and to follow up on the latest developments in Indo-Pak relations. Referring to the reaction to the Mumbai terror attacks, Menon noted that he had "never seen levels of anger like this" either in the Indian government or in the public. He did not think India would take any immediate military action, preferring to wait and see whether Pakistan would follow through on promises to pursue those responsible for the attacks and bring them to justice. Menon added, however, that the GOI would be under tremendous pressure to act if Pakistan's actions were insufficient. Menon believes the Pakistani military -- and not the civilian government -- is the key to whether Pakistan will do the right thing in responding to this terror crisis. End Summary.

----- Menon: Frustration, Anger, Political Pressure... -----

2. (S) Ambassador Mulford called on Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon on December 8 to discuss the latest developments in Indo-Pakistan relations in light of heightened tensions stemming from the November 26-28 terrorist siege of Mumbai. The Ambassador began by providing Menon, who was in Washington during the Secretary's December 4-5 visit to India, with a first hand readout of the Secretary's meetings in Delhi, and later discussed her follow on trip to Pakistan. Menon thanked the Ambassador for the readout, and noted that he had heard the meeting with incoming Home Affairs Minister Chidambaram had been particularly useful. Menon described the mood in India currently to be a mixture of frustration and anger, with the frustration stemming from unhelpful reports such as the false rumor that Foreign Minister Mukherjee had called President Zardari after the Mumbai attacks to threaten war, reports which Menon felt distracted people from the main issue and spewed tension at a most sensitive time. Additionally, referring to the reaction to the Mumbai attacks, Menon told the Ambassador he had "never seen levels of anger like this," either in the Indian government or in the public. The situation is further complicated, Menon continued, by a political calendar which is gearing up in earnest in India as a parliament session is scheduled to open December 10, followed by more state and then general elections by May.

"Now the political pressure really starts," Menon stated.

----- ... but No Immediate Military Action -----

¶3. (S) Despite the frustration, anger and political pressure, Menon did not believe India would be taking immediate military action. Rather, India will first look to see if Pakistan will carry out its promises to take action against the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks. However, Menon stated that it was important for the Pakistani government to be seen as taking meaningful action, "or else the pressure on (the Indian government) to do something becomes almost unbearable." Menon felt that the key to Pakistan's reaction rests with the Pakistan Army, even more than with the civilian government, as the army would have the influence over the necessary people and resources to take the appropriate action. Persuading General Kayani to take action was crucial, he believed. The civilian government carried little sway in terms of responding in a significant way, Menon suggested, adding that one could even wonder if one of the motives of the attacks were to show how little power the civilian government holds.

----- Hopeful that FBI Cooperation Will Set New Course -----

¶4. (S) The Ambassador noted to Menon that FBI officials working with Indian counterparts in Mumbai had reported that they were for the most part pleased with the cooperation taking place in investigating the Mumbai attacks. Menon concurred that this new level of cooperation between our law enforcement personnel was welcomed, and hoped it would lead

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to better working relations in the future. "I was pleased that no one in India as asking 'Why is the FBI here?'," he said, "Next time, they might ask 'Why isn't the FBI here?'" Menon opined that one silver lining to this recent terror attack could be that Indian law enforcement officials may now be more willing to work with counterparts from the U.S. and other countries.

¶5. (SBU) The Ambassador's discussion with Menon on the designation of Lashkar e Tayiba leaders on the UN Security Council's 1267 Committee list is being reported separately.
MULFORD